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Testimony in support of Senate Bill 189

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Public Health and Safety Division

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

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Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and committee members.

My name is Jane Smilie. I am the Administrator of the Public Health and Safety Division within the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

I am here in support of SB189.

Pharmacies are playing an increasing role in vaccinating the general public during influenza season. At least 19 states have already created policy allowing pharmacists to provide influenza immunizations for persons 12 years of age and older, as SB 189 would allow.

Recently, the Advisory Council on Immunization Practices has recommended that influenza vaccine be provided to all individuals over 6 months of age. In addition, last year during the H1N1 influenza pandemic, having this provision in place would have been helpful.

DPHHS believes that pharmacists can play a significant role vaccinating teenagers and that this effort would be an important addition to the control of influenza in the school setting.

We encourage Montana to join with the majority of states that have found this practice to be safe and effective.